

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
HA-05 /069 W

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P 230636Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8260
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY FREETOWN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 3906

DEPT PASS HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, ET, SU
SUBJECT: NIMEIRI AND MENGISTU TO MEET

1. PRESIDENT NIMEIRI AND PLAC CHAIRMAN MENGISTU HAVE AGREED TO MEET SOON, PROBABLY IN DAR ES SALAAM. ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR YILMA TEDESSE TOLD ME THIS DURING BRIEF CONVERSATION EVENING TUESDAY AUGUST 22 AT ROMANIAN NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION HERE. PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR WAS PRESENT. YILMA INDICATED THAT MEETING WOULD TAKE PLACE SOON, ALMOST CERTAINLY BEFORE NIMEIRI GOES TO U.S. NEXT MONTH, AND THAT HE THINKS VENUE WILL BE DAR ES SALAAM. HOWEVER, HE DID NOT RPT NOT PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL INFO.

2. ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR WAS CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT SUDANESE-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS. WHEN I SAID THAT I COULD NOT RPT NOT SEE ANY IMPORTANT ACTOR IN OVERALL SITUATION MAKING SIGNIFICANT MOVES THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE MODERATION BY OTHERS, YILMA DID NOT DISAGREE. HOWEVER, HE SAID HE THOUGHT THERE WAS DESIRE BY SUDANESE AND ETHIOPIAN
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GOVERNMENTS, AT LEAST, TO IMPROVE RELATIONS AND THAT OVER TIME THERE WOULD BE IMPROVEMENT. IT WAS AT THIS POINT THAT HE MENTIONED THAT TWO LEADERS HAD AGREED TO MEET AS EVIDENCE TO PROVE HIS POINT.

3. COMMENT: THERE HAS BEEN NO RPT NOT PUBLIC OR EVEN PRIVATE MENTION OF NIMEIRI-MENGISTU MEETING OF WHICH WE

AWARE BY SUDANESE. IF AMBASSADOR YILMA TEDESSE WAS WILLING TO DISCUSS VISIT BEFORE PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR AND ME, IT SUGGESTS THAT PLANS FOR VISIT ARE NOW NEARLY FIRM AND IT WILL BE ANNOUNCED SOON. ASSUME SENIOR LEVELS SUDANGOV BUSY PREPARING FOR VISIT, AND THIS MAY EXPLAIN WHY IT HAS BEEN SO EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO SEE SENIOR OFFICIALS AT FONMIN AND PRESIDENTIAL PALACE TO DISCUSS NIMEIRI VISIT TO U.S.

4. AS FOR SUBSTANCE BILATERAL TALKS, WHICH SEEMS TO BE RESULT NYERERE'S EFFORTS, WE WONDER HOW EITHER SIDE CAN GET OFF DEAD CENTER WITH RESPECT TO ERITREA WHICH IS MOST SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT AND KEY IRRITANT IN SUDAN-ETHIOPIA RELATIONS. WHILE NIMEIRI STOPS SHORT OF SUPPORTING FULL ERITREAN INDEPENDENCE AND WANTS ERITREANS AND ETHIOPIANS TO NEGOTIATE AGREEMENT, IT OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT EPMG AND ERITREAN GROUPS ARE SO FAR APART AT PRESENT THAT IT HARD TO CONCEIVE HOW SUCH TALKS WILL BEGIN. NIMEIRI'S OTHER PRINCIPAL CONCERN IS, SOMEHOW, TO REPATRIATE THOUSANDS OF SUDANESE ANSAR REBELS NOW IN ETHIOPIA. HERE AGAIN, HOWEVER, ETHIOPIANS HAVE LINKED FATE OF ANSAR WITH THAT OF ERITREAN REFUGEES IN SUDAN SO THAT ONCE AGAIN ERITREA IS KEY ISSUE. FOR TALKS TO SUCCEED FROM SUDANESE POINT OF VIEW SOME FORWARD MOVEMENT WILL BE NECESSARY REGARDING ERITREAN-ETHIOPIAN NEGOTIATIONS AND/OR REPATRIATION OF ANSAR BACK TO SUDAN.
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BOGOSIAN

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED HOR OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE.

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